

## Training session 1

### Peace is...



*"Peace is that state in which, in any specific context, each individual fully exercises his or her responsibilities to ensure that all individuals fully enjoy all the rights accorded to any one individual in that context. Peace is that state in which every individual is able to survive and thrive without being hampered by conflict, prejudice, hatred, antagonism, or injustice. Peace is not a static state of being, but rather a continual process of interaction based on a philosophy that espouses nonviolence, compassion, fairness, cooperation, respect and tolerance. It is important to realize that peace is not the absence of conflict. When conflict occurs, as it inevitably will, it is recognized, managed and resolved in ways that allow each individual to satisfy his or her basic needs" (Bodine, Crawford & Schrupf, 1994).*

#### **Purpose:**

- To understand that peace means different things to different people. To think about what peace means to me.

**Length:** 55 minutes

**Materials:** Flipchart, Markers, Cut-outs of different colored doves, tape

#### **Procedure:**

1. Hand out four or five doves to each of the participants. Ask them to write down their associations with the word *peace*. Ask them to think about how it makes them feel when they think about peace. Ask them – What is peace? What does peace look like? Smell like? Feel like? Sound like? Close your eyes and really envision peace – what do you see?

Participants can write words or phrases or entire sentences or even draw pictures.

2. Ask the participants to give examples of some of the phrases that we use when we talk about peace. Discuss the fact that all around the world people have difficulty in deciding what we mean by peace, because we are more attuned to what is NOT peace. We use the words ‘give me some peace’ to mean ‘stay quiet.’ A ‘peace accord’ means we will stop fighting. When we try to define

peace, we have a wide range of meanings, from children being quiet to countries not fighting. We can see that these ideas point to peace at all levels of society, from governmental and international levels to the community and personal relationships. Some refer to ‘internal’ peace and others to ‘external’ peace.

3. Introduce the participants to the following terms:

**Negative peace** – the absence of war and the reduction of violent conflict

**Positive peace** – the absence of war and violent conflict, but also the reduction or removal of factors that harm individual quality of life and cause conflict to happen. Positive peace requires economic and social justice, elimination of poverty and discrimination, and a healthy ecology.

**Structural violence** – not physical violence, but the less obvious violence caused by poverty, racism, sexism and human rights abuses. When institutions or social systems give some people power while depriving others of their basic human rights, it can be said that structural violence exists.

4. Put sheets of flipchart paper with the following headings around the room:

- Culture
- Environment
- Human Rights
- Social/Economic Injustice
- Physical Violence
- Inner Peace

5. Ask the participants to tape their doves to the sheet that they feel is appropriate for the words or descriptions that they wrote down.

6. Hold a discussion and ask the following questions: How do we lose peace? What effect does it have on others when we lose peace? What effect does it have on others when we stay peaceful? In what way does prosperity translate as peace? Is your classroom, community, country – in a state of negative or positive peace? Are there examples of structural violence in your school, community, country or elsewhere in the world? What actions can be taken to address this structural violence? We often do not understand how our actions create lack of peace. Although we may feel we cannot change the actions of others, the internal factors identified above such as happiness, confidence and prosperity are the beginnings of peace, and if we use them wisely then peace can grow. **Make the connection to peer-mediation and how we are going to learn skills that will help us become more effective peacemakers.**

